MARVEL REMEMBERS

JOHN ROMITA

MARVEL 17

LGY#260

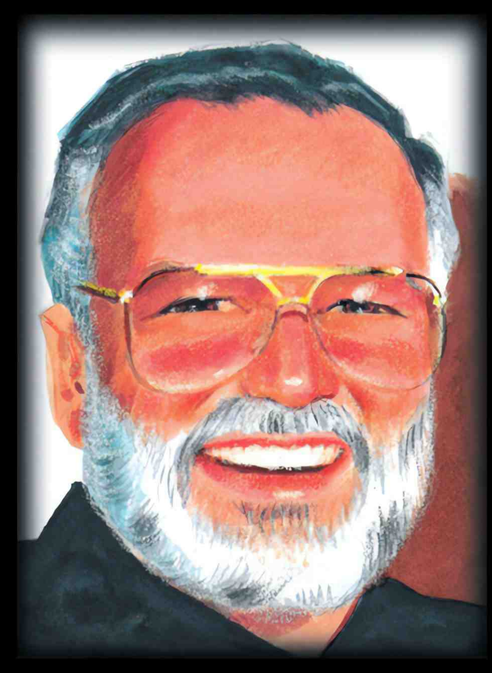
WEAPONS OF VENGEANCE PART 2

GHOST RIDER

PERCY SHAW BEREDO

John Romita

1930 – 2023



Marvel mourns the passing of comic-book artist John Romita Sr., whose work on *Amazing Spider-Man* helped make the character a worldwide sensation. In his work as Marvel's art director, he designed the Punisher and Wolverine and served as mentor for countless artists during his decades-long tenure with the company.

Romita had a profound effect on everyone he met at Marvel. He was always kind and warm and served as an inspiration to all who knew him or followed his work. Romita helped build the Marvel Universe as we know it, and he will be greatly missed.

"John Romita Sr. was an incomparable artist who brought so many iconic Marvel characters to life on the page and set the tone and look of Marvel's comics for decades. His version of Spider-Man has inspired so many of us at Marvel Studios. Our thoughts are with his family and the generations of artists and fans who fell in love with the characters he drew."

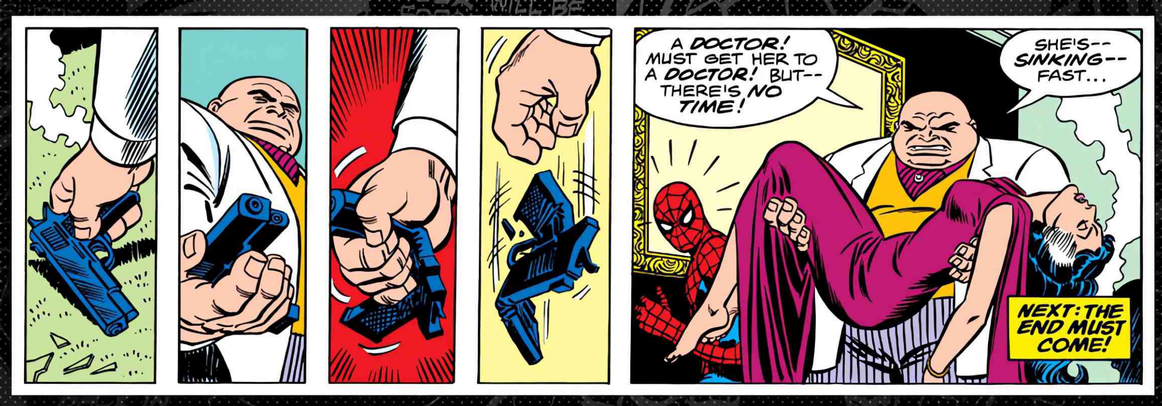
— KEVIN FEIGE

"I was recently able to fawn over some of John Romita Sr.'s original Spider-Man pages, and the word that kept popping into my mind as I marveled over his linework was 'timeless.' His style was such a departure from what had come before, which John did say made him nervous, but one that came to define the look of Peter, Spider-Man, MJ, Gwen and everyone else in their orbit. And the same was true for every Marvel character John designed, penciled and inked. Whether as an artist or art director, John's work influenced generations of comic book artists. With his passing, the comic industry loses a true legend, but just like his artwork, his legacy will remain timeless."

— C.B. CEBULSKI

"When you close your eyes and picture Spider-Man, you're probably picturing a John Romita Sr. Spider-Man. From his debut of the character in *Amazing Spider-Man #39*, the subsequent fifty issues of art, more than a hundred covers and the work he did on the newspaper strip, John defined Spidey for generations of people around the world. That would be enough for anyone else, but John was also an excellent art director, a fantastic father, a doting grandfather and a gentleman. All of us making Spider-Man comics, and Marvel Comics in general, work in his shadow and strive to live up to the example of the legend, Jazzy John Romita."

— NICK LOWE



DECADES OF AMAZING WORK

John Romita wore many hats at Marvel. His most famous contribution was his run on *Amazing Spider-Man*, including the above cover to the series' landmark fiftieth issue. His association with the character would include drawing the cover of the famed wedding of Peter Parker and Mary Jane Watson, *Amazing Spider-Man Annual #21*, seen opposite top right. With Stan Lee, he started the Spider-Man newspaper strip, including the sequence with Kingpin from Sept. 25, 1977, seen opposite center. Behind the scenes, Romita was responsible for designing many of Marvel's most famous characters. At bottom opposite are Romita's costume designs for Black Widow and Wolverine.

"One of the highlights of my career was working with John Romita Sr. I couldn't believe that my 25-year-old self was working and interacting with him, and what made it even better was that he was so considerate and kind – something that has stuck with me ever since, among many other memories with him. It was one of the rare moments where you meet one of your heroes and he exceeds your expectations in every possible way.

His contributions to Marvel's pantheon and culture are immense, and he will be sorely missed. He was a great and kind man who truly made the world a better place. My deepest condolences to Virginia, Johnny and the Romita family."

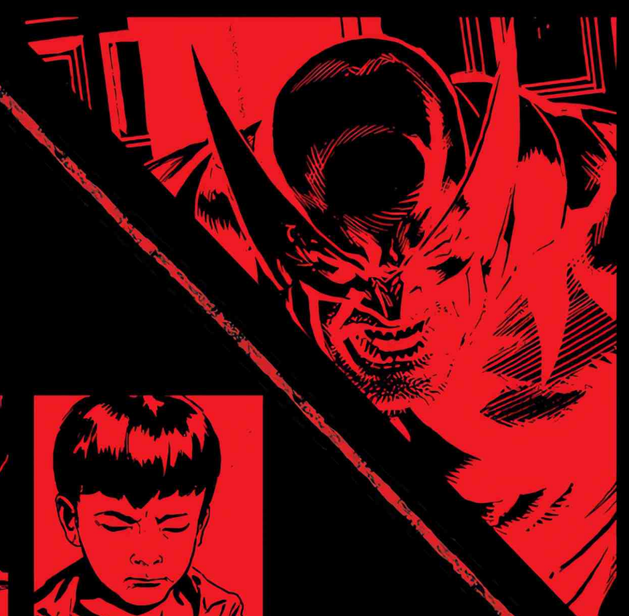
— DAN BUCKLEY

WHEN INNOCENT BLOOD IS SPILLED, A **SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE** IS BORN, AND **JOHNNY BLAZE** FINDS HIMSELF TRANSFORMED!

PREVIOUSLY...

YEARS AGO, GHOST RIDER CAUGHT THE TRAIL OF A POWERFUL DEMON CLINGING TO THE SOUL OF A BOY NAMED **BRAM**. WHEN BRAM'S MYSTERIOUS ABILITIES BROUGHT HIM TO THE ATTENTION OF THE X-MEN, THE DEMON SLAUGHTERED THE CHILDREN OF BRAM'S ORPHANAGE AND ATTACKED THE TEAM, SETTING WOLVERINE ON HIS TRAIL AS WELL. ASSUMING GHOST RIDER WAS CONNECTED TO THE DEMON, WOLVERINE ATTACKED!

IN THE PRESENT DAY, FOLLOWING AN ORCHIS COUP THAT BANISHED MOST OF MUTANTKIND FROM EARTH, THE PAIR HAVE FOUND EVIDENCE THAT BRAM'S HELLISH PARASITE HAS RESURFACED WITH DEADLY CONSEQUENCES...



WITH AN UNCANNY HEALING FACTOR AND ADAMANTIUM CLAWS, THE MUTANT KNOWN AS **LOGAN** PROTECTS THE INNOCENT AS **WOLVERINE**!

JOHNNY BLAZE
GHOST RIDER

LOGAN
WOLVERINE

BRAM

MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS...

GHOST RIDER

WEAPONS OF VENGEANCE

PART 2: **"DEMONOLOGY"**

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BENJAMIN PERCY ..... [WRITER]
GEOFF SHAW ..... [ARTIST]
RAIN BEREDO ..... [COLOR ARTIST]
VC's TRAVIS LANHAM ..... [LETTERER]

RYAN STEGMAN, JP MAYER & MARTE GRACIA ..... [COVER ARTISTS]
BJÖRN BARENDS ..... [VARIANT COVER ARTIST]

STACIE ZUCKER ..... [DESIGN]
NOAH SHARMA, KAT GREGOROWICZ & DREW BAUMGARTNER ..... [ASSISTANT EDITORS]
DARREN SHAN & MARK BASSO ..... [EDITORS]
C.B. CEBULSKI ..... [EDITOR IN CHIEF]

MASSACHUSETTS.

What so proudly we hailed, at the twilight's last gleaming...

Got tickets here. Good tickets. Who wants tickets?

MUD BAT STADIUM

What about you, my man?

First base? Third base? Home plate?

What you looking for?

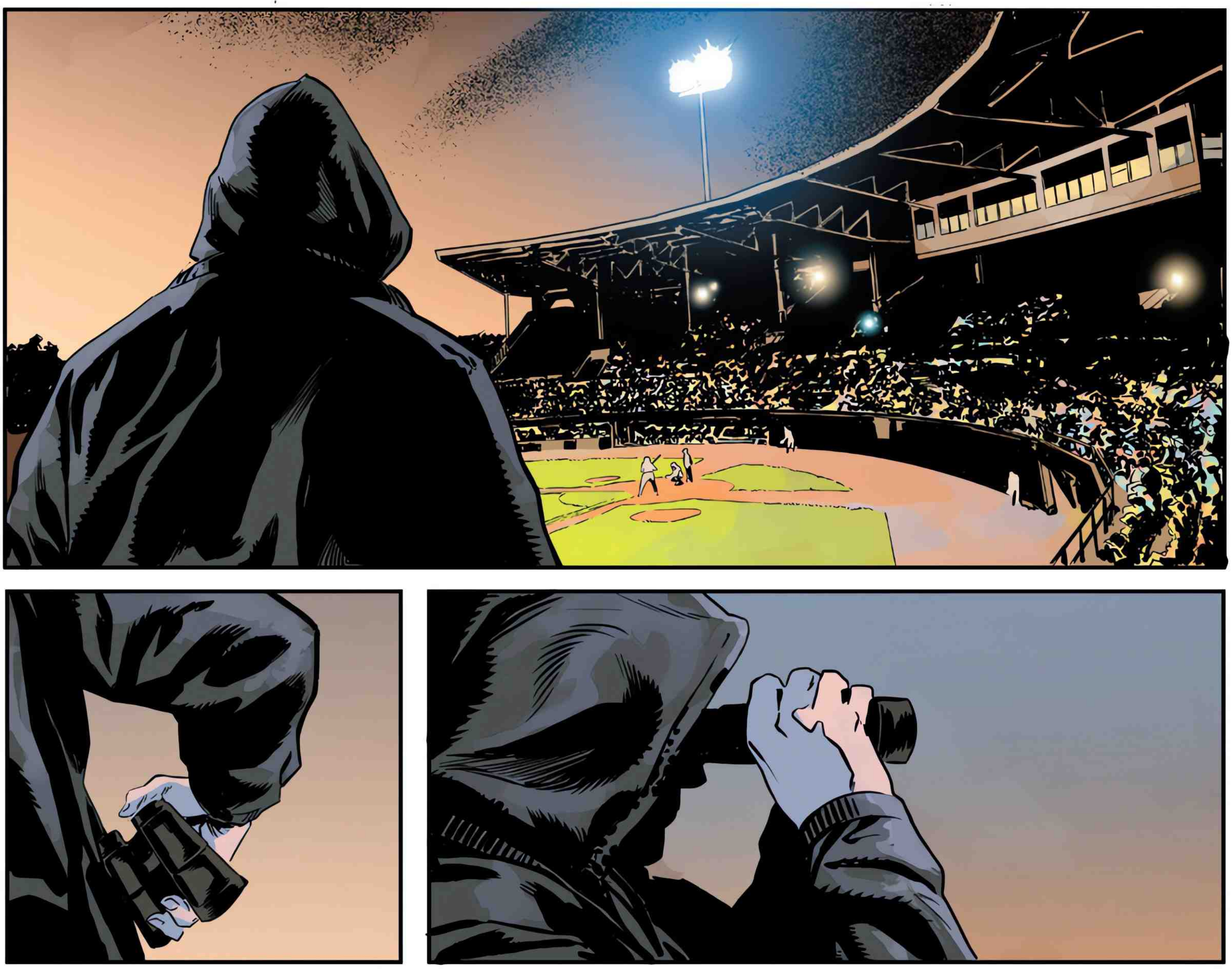
Mutants.

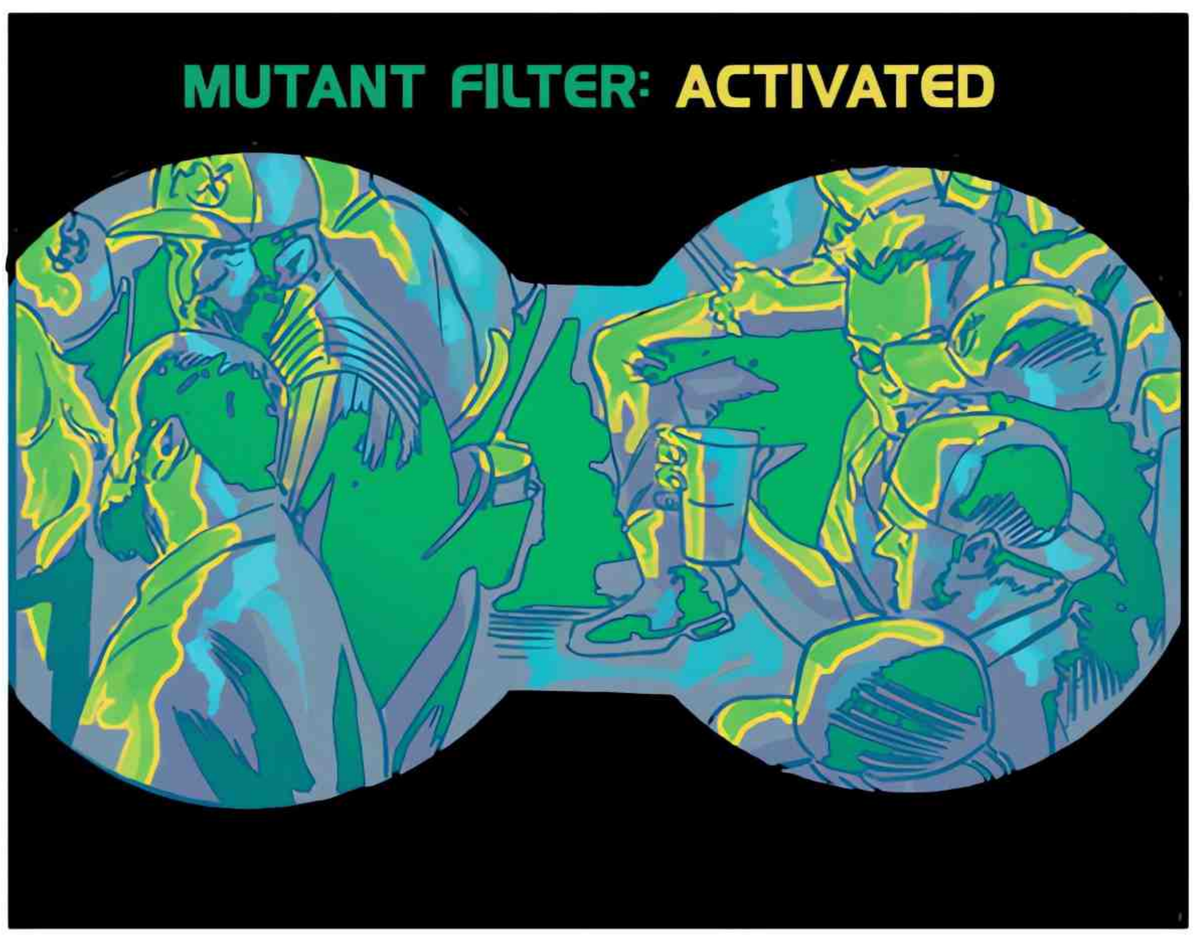
Nngh. Please. No...!

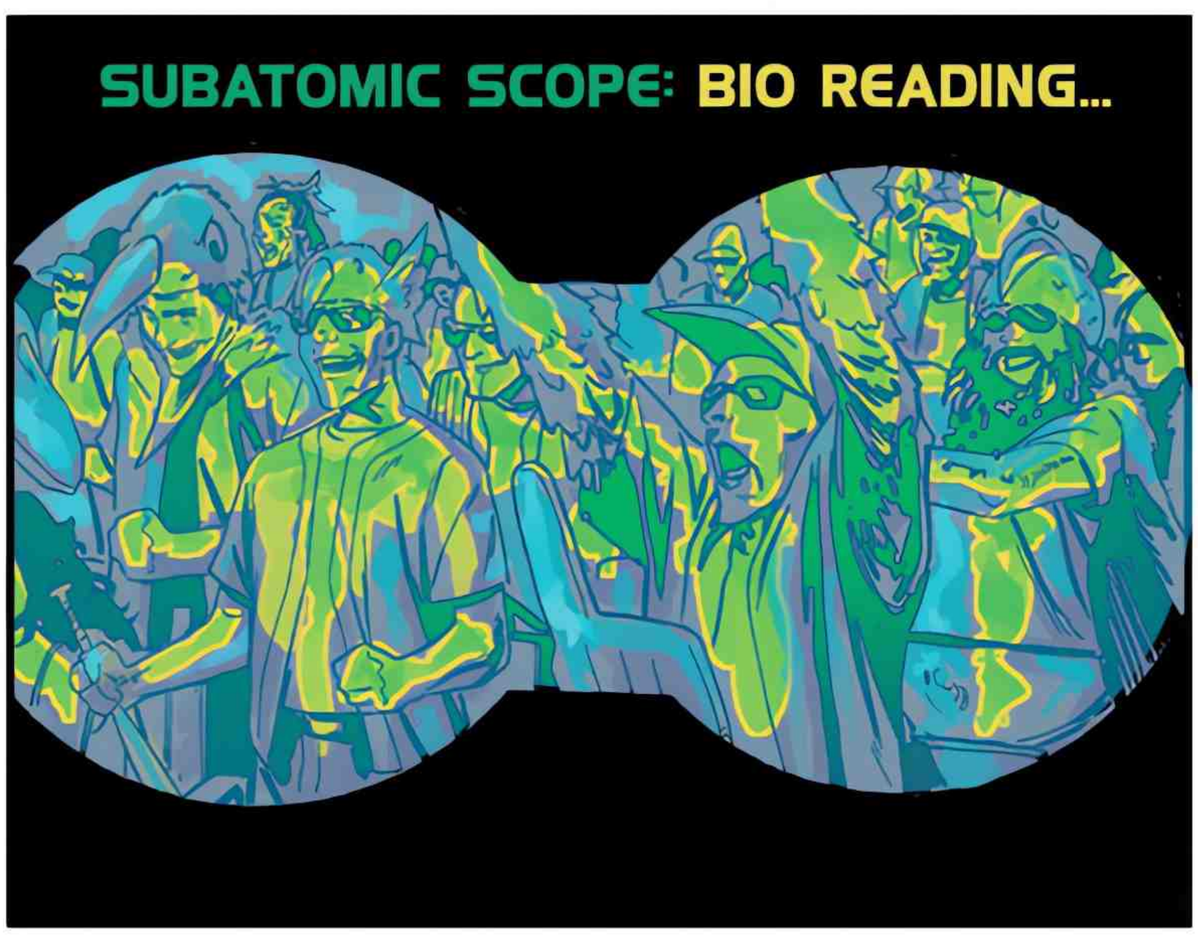
TSSSs

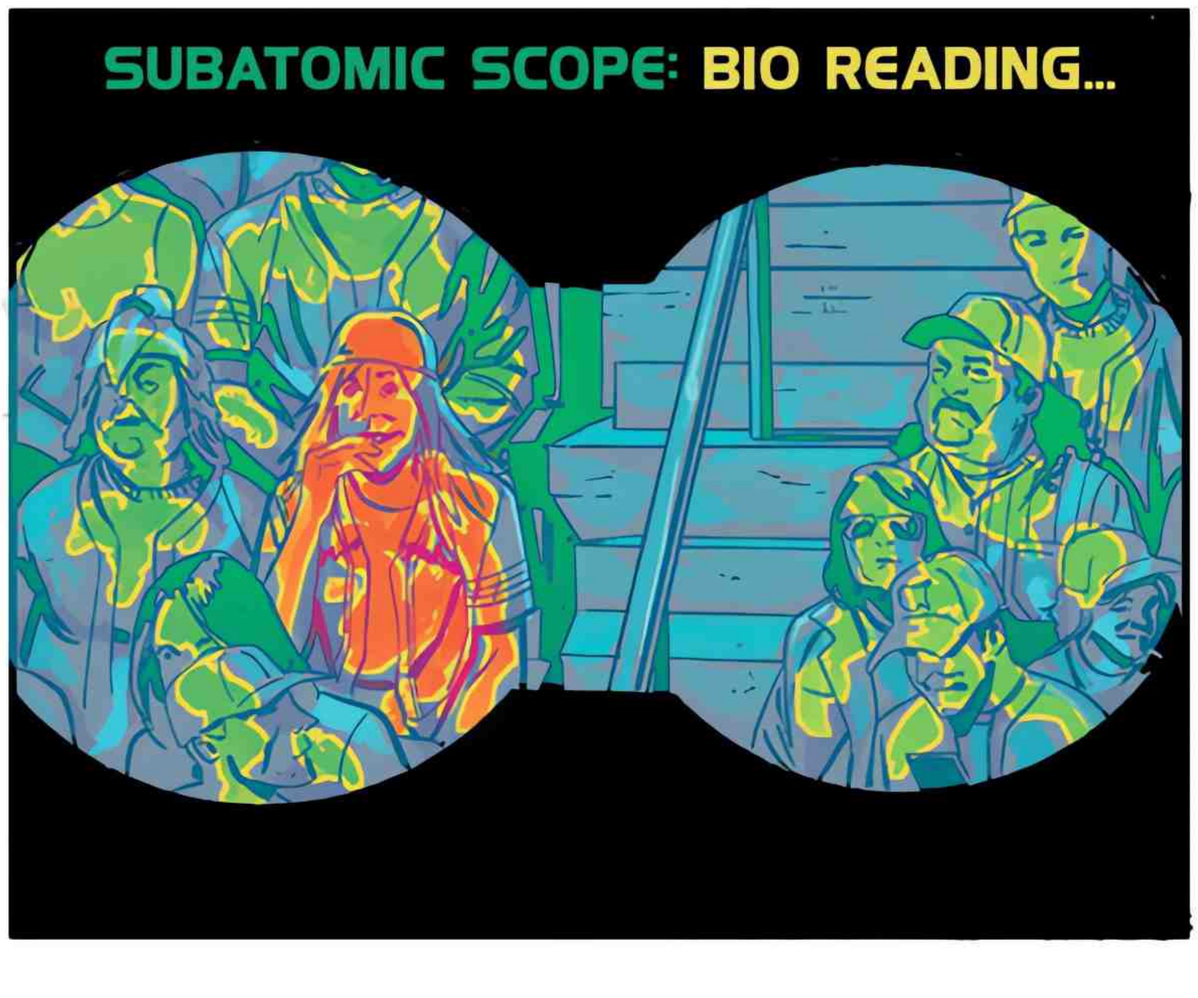
Take whatever you want, man.

Just let me go! *Just don't touch me!*




MUTANT FILTER: ACTIVATED


SUBATOMIC SCOPE: BIO READING...


SUBATOMIC SCOPE: BIO READING...

POSITIVE IDENTIFICATION: MUTANT

First inning isn't even over and I already got to take a leak.

Tailgating will do that to you.

KREEK

A FEW DAYS AGO. MAINE.

There're no more mutants.

Not supposed to be anyway.

They more or less ruled the planet for a while.

Now they're gone. To Mars or Arakko or whatever the hell they're calling it.

GRAYMALKIN CAMPSITES

CAMPGROUND FULL

An organization called *Orchis* is policing our borders, guess you could say.

Kings one day, exiles the next.

Suppose I can relate.

But there are some mutants who remain here in secrecy, despite the danger.

Like *Wolverine.*

And like *these* sorry bastards.

There were enough vultures spinning in the sky to be mistaken for a funnel cloud.

Somebody investigated and found this.

A dozen or so mutants had been hiding out in the woods.

Somebody-- or some*thing*-- found them.

+Sniff+ old blood.

We're three days too late.

We're always too late. This is our fifth @#$%& crime scene in as many days.

And now we got to wait for these cops to finish up before we can even hunt around for clues-- most of which will be swept and bagged by then.

We don't have enough evidence or body bags for this job.

You're going to have to do a supply run.

We need to do something different to get ahead of this #$@%.

Maybe I got an idea. Come on.

NOW.

You're telling me this happened during the middle of the damn game--with nine thousand people in attendance--and *nobody saw nothing?*

Where the #$%@ is my forensics team?

Right here, sir.

It's a little tight in here, so maybe everybody can clear the room while we take some photos and make our initial sweep.

Don't want to compromise the scene, you know?

Let's go, boys. I want a list of everybody who was in this park tonight and access to all surveillance footage within a three-block radius.

Let's bag him up and get the hell out of here.

SNIKT

This @#$%& guy looks like something sold at a demon craft fair.

Unngh.

No. Not now.

What's wrong?

The Rider... he wants out.

There's been too much innocent blood spilled. He's getting impatient.

And so am I.

Wolverine's got a buddy inside the C.I.A. who owes him a favor.

I told him to call it in.

ALL SEEING EYE
CHURCH OF CHRIST

NAIL SALON

TAN NOW

CLOSED

Jeff Bannister's his name.

And he allowed us access to one of the agency's satellite labs-- tucked away in a dead strip mall.

So, what exactly are we looking for? Beyond DNA confirmation that this guy's a mutant?

You've spent all this time as an analyst hunting for codes. Figured you could do something like that here.

There's some sort of symbology at work here.

Demonology, more like.

We got a positive result. *Homo superior.* But go on. Keep talking.

You got access to a pretty deep digital library, I'm guessing?

One of the best in the world, man.

Show me.

Codex Gigas is your starting point.

Okay...

But you'll want to extend your search through blood scrolls and black verses. and I'd cross-reference everything with the *Necronomicon.*

Damnation.

Exactly.

But, Jeff...

Yeah?

You got to be careful with this stuff. When you're exposed to too much of it...*hng...*

When you're exposed to too much of it...?

Blaze?

UNNGH!

Looks like I'm not the only one who needs to be careful.

What's wrong with this guy?

We all got our demons, Bannister.

MANY YEARS AGO. OUTSIDE WESTCHESTER, NEW YORK.

I will gladly kill you, but you're not the evil I seek.

That what you call Professor X and my friends?

That what you call the family you *tore apart* on the road back there?*

*In GR/Wolv: Weapons of Vengeance Alpha #1! --DS/MB

Evil?

I'm gonna teach you a thing or two about that word.

Listen to me. Whoever you are--

--I didn't do this.

Though the killer is of my kind.

Wait... you're saying...?

You and I seek the *same* justice.

A justice that may never come to pass because of this delay.

Who are you?

SNIKT

-Koff-

I said, who are you?

I'm Johnny Blaze.

And that was the Ghost Rider.

Where'd the other guy go? Bring him back.

I can't.

Why not? I thought he wanted to catch this @#$%.

It's too late. The evil's gone.

Gone? What do you mean *gone?* How do you know?

Because I--*the other guy*...he can feel it.

"Maybe it fled. Maybe it's hiding. Maybe it was somehow conquered.

"But if it comes back, we'll be ready to fight.

"And next time, maybe we'll even be on the same side."

NOW.
NEW YORK.

You able to hold yourself together, Blaze?

Don't worry about me.

You better not be from the health department. I already told you there's nothing I can do about the rats beyond the traps and poison.

We're actually here about something that happened a while back.

The orphan murders.

You reporters, then? Get the #$%& out!

I don't need any more attention. I'm already up to my ass in fines.

I got a bad temper, bub. Best you not trigger it.

We just want to talk out what happened, maybe check out some files from that time.

This isn't why we're...

What... are...we doing?

Open the door.

I didn't have nothing to do with those murders.

I know.

I went through days of interrogation.

I don't care.

KUNCH

There was a kid who used to live here. named Bram--

WHAM

What's that? What's he doing?

NAUGHTY

Kid... are you okay?

He puts us in there. When we're bad.

Hey! Hey, what the hell do you think you're doing?!

Better run, kid.

You don't want to see this.

I know I said my temper was bad...

...but wait till you meet this guy.

GAAK!

I'm not usually the one urging people to chill out, but don't kill this piece of @#$%.

We came here for intel.

The way to extract information is through pain...

...and *penance!*

Someone else was here a month ago!

Someone asking the same questions!

They took the files on Bram...

I have them now...or the *memory* of them.

Here.

Absorb them and know the truth.

NEW YORK DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

LONG-TERM CARE AGREEMENT
OR FOSTER PARENTS

Straub, Bram

RETURNED TO ORPHANAGE

CLEARLY DISTURBED, POSSIBLE SCHIZOPHRENIA

Next time, just @#$% tell me what you learned, okay?

The man who removed the files worked for the government. He had a federal warrant.

No @#$%? What department or agency?

The address listed should be familiar to us both.

Hell's Backbone. Utah, where we raced the devil once before.*

*See Ghost Rider (2022) #5! --DS

"It is a frail spot...

"...a place where things spill over...

KEEP OUT
TOP SECRET

"...a perfect location for their research."

WEAPON PLUS HELLFIRE PROGRAM

TO BE CONTINUED IN WOLVERINE #36!

NEXT
WOLVERINE #36

WEAPONS OF VENGEANCE CHECKLIST

~~GHOST RIDER/WOLVERINE: WEAPONS OF VENGEANCE ALPHA #1~~ . . .

~~GHOST RIDER #17~~ . . . . . .

WOLVERINE #36 . . . . . .

GHOST RIDER/WOLVERINE: WEAPONS OF VENGEANCE OMEGA #1 . .